

COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
December 14, 2004

The meeting of the Maryland Commission on Human Relations was called to order on Tuesday, December 14, 2004 at 10:10 a.m., in Baltimore, Maryland.

Present Thomas Owen, Roberto Allen, Barbara Dezmon, Norman Gelman, John Hermina and Pamela Scarbro.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES The minutes of the November meeting were accepted as written.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT Commissioners received copies of the Chairperson's Report (See attached).

Public Forum Committee Chairperson Owen informed Commissioners that the Public Forum Committee met to discuss thoughts regarding holding public forums. This item will be discussed further under Old Business.

SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS There were no Sub-Committee Reports this month.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT Commissioners received copies of the Executive Director's Report (See attached). The Executive Director informed Commissioners that the agency's annual Winter Fest would be held on Friday, December 17, 2004. All Commissioners are invited to attend.

Martin Luther King Breakfast The Executive Director informed Commissioners that the Martin Luther King Breakfast would be held on January 17, 2005 at Martin's West in Woodlawn at 7:30 a.m. If Commissioners are interested in attending please inform the Administrative Officer.

Community Outreach/Education Unit Commissioners received copies of the Community Outreach/Education Unit Report (See attached). The Public Affairs Coordinator informed Commissioners that the first meeting was held with a volunteer from the State Police, Ann Klein Galloway. Ms. Galloway has offered to conduct volunteer hate crimes training with police forces. MCHR will be preparing the curriculum for the hour training for police

at their in-service training.

Annual Report The Public Affairs Coordinator informed Commissioners that Chairperson Owen has reviewed and accepted the Letter of Transmittal. The Annual Report is ready to be put out for bid to a printer. The Annual Report will be forwarded to the Governor by January 1, 2005.

The Spirit Program The Public Affairs Coordinator is in the information-gathering phase on another volunteer project. The Department of Justice has contacted the Public Affairs Coordinator about a program called The Spirit Program, which will be offered to public schools. This is a diversity type program that involves students and requires leadership. The Pennsylvania Human Relations Commissioners has done wonders with this program in Pennsylvania. The Public Affairs Coordinator is seeking another volunteer to coordinator this program through MCHR and the Department of Justice.

Hispanic Outreach A Hispanic Outreach event is being planned for Fair Housing Month, which is April. This event is being planned with HUD and the Governor's Commission of Hispanic Affairs and will be held on the Upper Shore.

Radio Interview Commissioner Allen inquired as to what the radio interview was all about. The Public Affairs Coordinator stated that this interview was a program produced by Bill Kladky, Baltimore Community Housing Resource Board. Guests discuss many different topics. The Public Affairs Coordinator presented an overview of the Commission. Commissioner Allen inquired as to whether MCHR could get public service announcements on different radio stations. The Public Affairs Coordinator will reinstate that idea.

Legislation Commissioner Gelman inquired as to the status of MCHR's legislation. The Public Affairs Coordinator informed Commissioners that she called the Governor's office to find when MCHR may hear something. The legislative packet has not been submitted to the Governor yet. The Public Affairs Coordinator was told that MCHR might hear something by the end of this week. The General Counsel informed Commissioners that the third round of circulating bills to all state agencies was just completed.

DEPUTY DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Commissioners received copies of the Deputy Director's Report (See attached). The Deputy Director informed Commissioners that the intake level was down last year and are down farther this year. The agency has noted that as a result of the installation and implementation of the new telephone system callers are not getting to their choices quickly enough. The agency is in the process of redoing the menu and the message in the telephone tree. Historically during December and January intake always goes down.

Commissioner Gelman stated that if this trend continues the agency should be thinking of ways to figure out why intake levels are diminishing.

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR'S

Commissioners received copies of the Assistant Director's Report (See attached). The Assistant Director informed Commissioner that MCHR is currently meeting its

REPORT

spending targets.

Information
Technology Unit

The Assistant Director informed Commissioners that DSL internet service would be available in the Salisbury and Leonardtown offices through Verizon. These two offices will have faster internet service. The Hagerstown office is not eligible for DSL because of the location of that building.

**GENERAL
COUNSEL'S
REPORT**

Maryland State
Lottery

Commissioners received copies of the General Counsel's Report (See attached).

The General Counsel highlighted a public accommodations case against the Maryland State Lottery that was settled. In many public accommodations cases not only does the resolution impact the individual who filed the complaint but does have class ramifications. The lottery was willing to change its policy; it was willing to create a system where, in licensing vendors it would first inspect to see if its location is accessible. Vendors would post on their web site accessible locations by zip code and address. Establishments that do not have accessibility to the lottery, the Lottery would review their licensing and the issue of their accessibility. MCHR will be monitoring establishments to see that the above-mentioned information is on the web sites, and that licenses that would be given out would be provided in areas that are accessible.

OLD BUSINESS

Letter to Lieutenant
Governor

Commissioner Scarbro raised the question of writing to the Lieutenant Governor requesting a meeting again, as had been discussed at the November meeting. Chairperson Owen stated that he intended to do so. Commissioner Scarbro recommended that the request be addressed to the Lieutenant Governor's Chief of Staff. Commissioner Scarbro also suggested eliminating discussion of MCHR's budget from the agenda of this meeting. Chairperson Owen agreed to these suggestions.

**EXECUTIVE
SESSION**

The Commission interrupted the Public Session to enter into Executive Session. During this session the Commission discussed personnel matters pertaining to Executive Staff.

Public Forum
Committee

Resuming the Public Session, Chairperson Owen informed Commissioners that the Public Forum Committee met to discuss the idea of holding forums. During the meeting three general purposes were developed 1) to obtain understanding of where discrimination is occurring in Maryland today from those who would likely be impacted; 2) to determine how discrimination has changed in Maryland; and 3) to develop positive public relations for the commission and increase awareness of our role and function. Commissioner Gelman disagreed with the general nature of these purposes, and suggested tabling the idea of Public Forums until the Committee made a more specific proposal. MCHR staff members also expressed the view that there was not enough specificity in the proposals.

After lengthy discussion of this matter, the Public Affairs Coordinator suggested a plan to focus on the problems of immigrants in Maryland, particularly on the Eastern Shore. The Public Affairs Coordinator also recommended working with the Hispanic Affairs Commission to accomplish this goal. Chairperson Owen

asked the Public Affairs Coordinator to bring a proposal for this plan to the Commission in January

Commissioner Gelman withdrew his motion to table, agreeing that the Public Affairs Coordinator's plan would suffice to provide the desired specificity for Public Forums.

Chairperson Owen suggested looking also at the conditions facing immigrants in the greater Washington, DC, area also. Commissioner Dezmon would like MCHR to inform Commissioners of what is going on in the local commissions.

The Commission meeting was adjourned at 12 p.m.

Barbara Wilson